United Nations CEDAW/C/KNA/1-4

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
22 January 2002

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined initial, second, third and fourth periodic reports of States parties

Saint Kitts and Nevis*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

02-22912 (E) 130602

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Part One

1. Land and People

1.1 The Land

1. St. Christopher and Nevis is a twin island nation, located in the northern part of the Leeward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean, 17^0 5' north of the equator and 62^0 west, separated by a channel two miles wide.

2. St. Kitts, short for St. Christopher, is twenty-three (23) miles long and covers a geographic area of sixty-eight (68) square miles. The total area of the two islands is approximately 269 square kilometers or 104 square miles. The topography is marked by a central range of mountains, including Liammuiga, a dormant volcano. A dense tropical forest near the summit is in sharp contrast to the fertile lands which extend seawards. The capital of St. Kitts is Basseterre.

3. Nevis is the smaller of the islands, with a surface area of thirty-six square miles, it consists of long stretches of golden, sandy, palm lined beaches on the West and North coasts. The capital of Nevis is Charlestown. The climate of St. Kitts and Nevis is pleasant with a mean temperature of seventy-nine (79) degrees fahrenheit and an annual average rainfall of fifty-five (55) inches.

4. St. Kitts and Nevis is small and therefore traveling from one area to another can be achieved without difficulty. Transportation is provided for school children from the rural areas by government, but the bus service for other commuters is provided by private individuals. Telecommunications/information services are provided by the St. Kitts and Nevis Telecommunications Ltd and are modern and advanced, facilitating efficient communication both locally and internationally. The official language is English.

5. St. Kitts and Nevis is easily accessible by air, with an international airport in St. Kitts and a shorter landing strip in Nevis. The road network is well developed, providing vehicular access to all villages.

1.2 National Economic Performance and Trends

6. The economy of the Federation of St. Christopher and Nevis is open in nature and is therefore subject to a high level of external economic dependence. In addition, the geographic location of the islands renders them extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. These adverse weather systems prove to be major threats to economic activities of the islands.

7. The economy of St. Kitts and Nevis is based mainly on agriculture, light manufacturing, tourism and some agri-manufacture. The main agricultural export commodity is sugar. Over the years the country has diversified into tourism and an export oriented manufacturing sector.

8. The currency in use is the Eastern Caribbean Dollar which is pegged to the US Dollar viz: E.C.$2.7169 = US$1.00 (1998).

9. The economy experienced a modest but steady growth of 4.1 percent in 1994 after having achieved an annual average growth rate of nearly 6 percent over the previous decade. This pattern of high growth was interrupted in 1990, following the passage of Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The growth rate of real GDP fell from 6 per cent in 1989 to 3.1 per cent in 1990 mainly as a result of the hurricane which caused widespread damage amounting to approximately US$44.4 million. Approximately six years later, the economy felt the effects of yet another devastating hurricane. In September of 1995, Hurricane Luis battered the islands. Damage to infrastructure, social and economic services, was in the region of US$197 million. Recently, the Federation has been severely hit by yet another hurricane, namely Georges (September 1998). Preliminary investigations estimate damages to be US$402.1 million.[1] This represents 2.2 times the estimated GDP for 1997. A gender impact assessment on the effects of hurricane damage was not available.

10. Tourism continues to be one of the major contributors to the economy. Sugar production, though still a major industry has been declining as it has been in the other sugar producing countries. Agricultural diversification has been steadily increasing in response to the needs of domestic consumption. Growth in construction, manufacturing, retail sales and finance has also been increasing in recent years.

International trade

11. For the first time in over six years the value of imports declined, in 1991. Imports were valued at E.C.$297.80 million compared to E.C.$299 million in 1990. Food accounted for between 17 percent and 20 percent of all imports. However, the government's diversification plan of 1985, which aimed at turning over 20 per cent of sugar lands to small farmers to produce food, may have impacted positively, as the food percentage of total imports declined from 21.3, per cent in 1985 to a low of 14.6 per cent in 1989. In 1991 the figure was 6.7 per cent. The priority crops were carrots, cabbage, sweet pepper, white potato and tomato.[2]

12. The Federation has recorded negative balance of trade throughout the ten year period. In general, over the ten year period imports were between two and four times the value of exports including earnings from tourism as well as value added exports. The gap between the value of imports and

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[1]Economic Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Post Hurricane Georges Report. The Planning Unit of the Ministry of Finance, Development and Planning , Government of St. Kitts and Nevis. September p.1.

[2]Consolidating Social Achievements & Meeting the Challenges of the 21 st Century Child Survival, Development & Protection in St. Kitts & Nevis. 1991-96 Situation Analysis of Children and their Families. UNICEF, Caribbean Area Office 1997. P 12.

exports has increased every year except in 1991 when there was slight improvement in trade balance due to a contraction in imports and a constant level of exports. The trade balance for 1991 was negative, E.C. $224.3 million in 1990.[3]

13. St. Kitts and Nevis GDP growth averaged 5.82 percent per year during the period 1984 to 1994. Growth in non traditional agriculture and increases in services, mainly related to tourism sector were contributing factors.

14. The government's policy is aimed at a shift away from agriculture towards tourism and manufacturing. There has been a growth in the tourism sector contribution to GDP from 2.2 percent in 1983 to 6.7 percent in 1993.

Debt

15. The negative balance of payments and the high level of debt servicing are among the most important indicators of the resource constraints affecting economic life in the Caribbean .[4]

16. The Federation's external and internal debt for the period 1990 - 1995 is outlined below.

Table 1 : Internal and external debt ECM$, 1990-95

Year	External	Internal	Total
1990	107.7	0	107.7
1991	112.8	88.4	201.0
1992	119.0	82.9	201.9
1993	126.2	143.9	270.1
1994	140.6	171.4	312.0
1995	136.9	184.8	212.0

Source: Table 1.16 - 1991-96 Situation Analysis of St. Kitts & Nevis

[3]Ibid p12

[4]"Socioeconomic and Political Context", by Karl Theodore and Edward Green, in Health Conditions in the Caribbean. Scientific Publications No.561, Pan American Health Organization. 1997.

17. The country's national debt increased during the period, due mainly to the implementation of several capital projects by the government. In 1994 Debt Service Ratio was 3.73 percent of GDP.[5] The EIU, The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report 3rd Quarter 1997, indicated that the debt service ratio increased from 4.0 per cent in 1995 to 5.2 per cent in 1995 and again in 1996 to 5.3 per cent.

1. 3 The People

18. The estimated population as of June 30, 1996 was 42,280. The population of St. Kitts was 34,550 and that of Nevis was 7,730. Women comprised 49.6 per cent of the population and women of child bearing age 15-49 numbered 10,830.[6]

19. Most of the population is concentrated around the capital cities of Basseterre and Charlestown.

20. The population of St. Kitts and Nevis decreased from 43,309 in 1980 to 40,618 in 1991 (-6.2%). The decline was noted on both islands, see Table 2. The estimated mid year population for 1994 was 40,050 indicating a continuing decline.

Table 2: Intercensal Population Size and Growth 1946-1991, St Kitts & Nevis

INTERCENSAL PERIOD	NO OF YEARS	TOTAL POPULATION AT END OF INTERVAL	TOTAL GROWTH	INTERCENSAL CHANGE (%)	ANNUAL RATE OF CHANGE (%)
1946 - 1960	14	50,883	9677	23.48	1.25
1960 - 1970	10	45,327	-5556	-10.92	-1.15
1970 - 1980	10	43,309	-2018	-4.45	-0.46
1980 - 1991	11	40,618	-2691	-6.21	-0.58

Source: Demographic Data, Statistical Office, St Kitts/Nevis

[5]Consolidating Social Achievements & Meeting Challenges of the 21st Century - Child Survival, Development & Protection in St. Kitts & Nevis. UNICEF Caribbean Area Office, 1997. p.13.

[6]St. Kitts and Nevis Statistical Office revised figures January 1998.

21. The negative growth experienced over the years has been attributed to emmigration in the age group 25-44 years. In the period under review migration has been mainly to the USA, USVI, Puerto Rico and St. Martin. This trend is expected to continue into the year 2000.

22. The age distribution of the population for St. Kitts and Nevis is shown in Table 3 for 1994.

Table 3. Sex and Age distribution of the population St. Kitts and Nevis 1994

AGE GROUP	ST.KITTS			NEVIS			ST KITTS & NEVIS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
37259	5.7	5.1	10.8	4	4.2	8.2	5.4	5	10.3
37384	5.7	5.2	10.8	4.7	4.6	9.3	5.5	5.1	10.5
37542	5.5	5.5	11	4.7	4.6	9.3	5.3	5.4	10.7
15-19	5	4.9	9.9	4.4	4.2	8.6	4.9	4.8	9.6
20-24	4.5	4.2	8.6	3.9	4.2	8.1	4.3	4.2	8.5
25-29	4.5	4.3	8.7	3.3	4.1	7.4	4.2	4.2	8.5
30-34	4.1	4.2	8.3	3.9	3.4	7.3	4.1	4	8.1
35-39	3.5	3.8	7.3	3.2	3	6.2	3.5	3.6	7.1
40-44	2.7	2.7	5.4	2.9	2.9	5.8	2.7	2.7	5.5
45-49	1.9	1.7	3.6	2.5	2.2	4.7	2	1.8	3.8
50-54	1.4	1.2	2.7	2.2	1.8	4	1.6	1.3	2.9
55-59	1.3	1	2.3	1.6	2.1	3.6	1.3	1.2	2.6
60-64	1.2	1.1	2.3	1.8	1.9	3.8	1.3	1.3	2.6
65-69	1.1	1.3	2.4	1.8	1.9	3.8	1.2	1.4	2.6
70-74	1	1.2	2.2	1.5	1.8	3.3	1.1	1.3	2.4
75-79	0.9	0.9	1.8	1.2	1.5	2.7	0.9	1	1.9
80-84	0.5	0.6	1.1	1	1.1	2.1	0.6	0.7	1.3
85+	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.8	0.4	0.7	17. 1. 0
TOTAL	50.6	49.4	100	49.2	50.8	100	50.3	49.7	100

Source: Demographic Data, Statistical Office, St Kitts/Nevis

23. The under fifteen (15) years age group accounts for 31.5 per cent of the population, a decrease from 38.4 per cent in 1980.

24. The elderly population, sixty-five (65) years and over, has been relatively stable and represented 9.2 per cent of the total population in 1994. The elderly dependency ratio, that is the ratio of persons 65 years of age and over to the population of working age, 15-64 in 1991 was 17.8 per cent. The life

expectancy at birth for the general population is 66. But women are expected to outlive men by at least 6 years as the life expectancy for men is estimated at 63 years and for women at 69.[7] Issues regarding the quality of life of elderly dependent women are now being given consideration.

25. Over the years there have been improvements in the health and living conditions in St. Kitts and Nevis. The housing population which had improved in quantity, quality and adequacy has been severely affected by recent hurricanes. Approximately 12,200 houses, or 85 per cent of the housing population sustained considerable damage in the September 1993 hurricane. An approximate loss of E.C. $647 million is estimated. The National Housing Corporation (NHC) suffered to the extent of E.C.$4 million.

1.4 General Political Structure

26. After a long period of British rule, St. Kitts and Nevis attained full political independence in September 1983 and adopted a democratic form of government with a Westminister type of parliament. From 1980 to 1995 July , the Federation was governed by the People's Action Movement (PAM) in collaboration with the Nevis Reformation Party (NRP). The St Kitts-Nevis Labour Party won seven of the eleven seats in July 1995 general elections and is now in power in the Federation. The Opposition comprises the CCM (Concerned Citizens Movement) with two seats, PAM with one and the NRP (Nevis Reformation Party) with one.

27. The islands of St. Christopher and Nevis constitute a federal state within the British Commonwealth. Government is constituted by - an Executive branch, consisting of the Prime Minister, The Honourable Dr. Denzil Douglas, and a Cabinet of seven (7) Ministers and an Attorney General; and the Legislative Branch, comprises a unicameral 14 member House of Assembly with eleven elected members and three nominated members (two on the advice of the Prime Minister and one on the advice of the leader of the opposition) . It sits for between four and five years. Of the 14 member National Assembly, two are women. No women were elected in the last general elections. Two however have been appointed as Senators.

28. Elections are constitutionally due every five years. Nevis has its own administration and is guaranteed central representation. One elected local government official in Nevis is a woman.

29. St. Kitts was the first island in the West Indies to be colonized by the English in 1623. The islands became completely British by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783.

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[7] Table 1 Demographic Indicators. Health Conditions in the Caribbean. Pan American Health Organization. 1997 p 319

1. 5 General Legal Framework within which human rights are protected

Human Rights

30. The constitution of the Federation of St. Christopher and Nevis provides the legal framework within which the human rights of men and women are protected.

31. Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms is clearly stated in the Constitution, Chapter II, Section 3 as follows:

32. " Every person in Saint Christopher and Nevis is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, that is to say, the right , whatever his race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely -

(a) life, liberty, security of the person, equality before the law and the protection of the law;

(b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; and

(c) protection for his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation..."

33. The legal system is based on the English common law as exercised by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court of Justice. Provision is made for appeal to the Privy Council in London.

National Machinery

34. The Government of St. Christopher and Nevis has been one of the first in the region to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs. During the period under review, the Ministry was part of the ministerial cluster of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Women's Affairs which was established in 1984. This was as a result of the expansion and upgrading of the Women's Desk, which had been established in 1980. At that time, the desk fell under the umbrella of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs.

35. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Women's Affairs, together with the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Gender and Development and the National Council on Women form the National Women's machinery. The Women's Affairs Division, is headed by a Director and has three additional staff, consisting of a Research Officer , one field officer and a secretary.

36. The mission statement of the Division, revised in 1996, captures the role of the division in its capacity as the key actor in the machinery which enables women to exercise their rights under the constitution and within the bounds set out by the CEDAW.

The Mission Statement is as follows:

37. "The Ministry of Women's Affairs is committed to building a country in which women enjoy their full rights and are equal partners in shaping the economic, political, social and cultural development of their country. The National Women's Machinery is the central policy coordinating unit inside Government. It has the major responsibility for monitoring and improving the status of women in the country through the implementation of the FWCW-PFA and the Commonwealth POA. The National Women's Machinery comprises the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Permanent Secretary, the Director of Women's Affairs and her staff and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender and Development. It is supported by a National Advisory Council on Gender Equity and Women's Organizations, Clubs and other members of civil society working for the mainstreaming of gender in all national policies, plans and programmes."

Information and Publicity

38. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has an excellent working relationship with the media and works in partnership for information dissemination , public education and social mobilization. Programmes such as the weekly radio programme (run in the early 1990's) "We are Family" , was used to inform citizens on issues relating to family life, health, education, legislation and a wide range of areas. In the post Beijing period, both the Government owned and the privately owned media have been engaged in ongoing advocacy around campaigns against domestic violence and child abuse; teen mothers right to continuing education; women's participation in decision making; and women's rights under CEDAW.

Part Two
Definition of Discrimination and Obligations of States

Article 1 Definition of Discrimination Against Women

For the purposes of the Convention, the term "discrimination against women" means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Article 2 Obligations to Eliminate Discrimination

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and to this end, undertake:

18. *To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or the appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means the practical realisation of this principle;*
19. To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
20. To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
21. To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;
22. To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation or enterprise;

23. To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
24. To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 3 The Development and Advancement of Women

States parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Article 1-3 - Elimination of Discrimination

39. The St. Christopher and Nevis Constitution Order 1983 guarantees Fundamental Rights and Freedoms to every person in the nation, regardless of race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex.

Section 3 states:

40. "Whereas every person in Saint Christopher and Nevis is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, that is to say, the right , whatever his race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely -

34. life, liberty, security of the person, equality before the law and the protection of the law;
35. freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; and
36. protection for his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation,

the provisions of this Chapter shall have effect for the purpose of affording protection to those rights and freedoms subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of those rights and freedoms by any person does not impair the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest.".

41. Section 15 Subsection (1) elaborates -

42. Subject to subsections (4),#(5), and (7), no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.

43. Subsection (2) states -

44. Subject to subsections ( ), (7), (8), and (9), a person shall not be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.

45. Subsection (3) states:

46. In this section the expression "discriminatory" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, birth out of wedlock political opinions or affiliations, colour, sex or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages that are not accorded to persons of another such description."

It is recognised that gender based violence may impair or nullify the enjoyment by women and girls of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the struggle to provide women greater protection against such nullification of their human rights the Government passed a series of laws such as :

47. - The Law Reform (Miscellaneous provisions) Act, which provides stiffer penalties for rape, incest sodomy, indecent assault or any offence involving children, and allows for in camera hearings of sexual offences. The Act also prohibits reporting or broadcasting matters which would lead to the identification of defendants in sexual offence cases. This is especially important in a small society such as St. Kitts and Nevis;

48. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1976 amends the Act of 1887 which deals with defilement and unlawful carnal knowledge of girls under the ages of twelve and fourteen years. The words twelve and fourteen have now been substituted for fourteen and sixteen in specific sections. The 1976 act also deals with cohabitation with an unmarried girl under sixteen years of age.

In addition, St. Kitts and Nevis supported the Draft Convention on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women, passed by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States and became a signatory to the Convention in 1985.

Article 4 Acceleration of equality between Men and Women

Adoption by States Parties of temporary measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail, as a consequence, the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity, shall not be considered discriminatory.

Comments

49. The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has a clear and long standing policy aimed at accelerating the de facto equality of women. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was first established in 1984 and grew out of the Women's Desk which was housed at the Youth and Community Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education. In 1987 a Women's Desk was established in Nevis.

50. Throughout its existence, the Ministry, has used the World Plan of Action of the United Nations International Women's Conference, held in Mexico in 1975 and the Forward Looking Strategies of the UN End of the Decade Conference of Nairobi, 1985 as the basis for its policy and actions. The government became a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985 and has embraced the Fourth World Conference on Women - Platform for Action, as a guide for its own action.

51. The Honourable Prime Minister in the 1996 Budget Address stated, " We have created a new post of Director of Women's Affairs within the Ministry to coordinate all activities geared towards the promotion of the interest and well-being of women. Our aim is to ensure that any vestige of discrimination against women in society would be eradicated and to provide all of our women with the opportunity to join the mainstream of the development process".

52. This stated policy of the Government is supported by the Constitution of the Federation.

53. Chapter II of the Constitution, section 15 (4) (d), provides for special measures to be considered under the law.

54. It states -

55. "Subsection (1) shall not apply to any law so far as that law makes provision whereby persons of any such description as is mentioned in subsection (3) may be subjected to any disability or restriction or may be accorded any privilege or advantage that, having regard to its nature and to special circumstances pertaining to those persons or to persons of any other such description, is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society."

56. During the period under review , there has been significant law reform to support special measures to accelerate the equality between men and women. Prior to 1980, unmarried women who became pregnant while working in the public service were automatically dismissed while their male partners retained their jobs. Government policy and the Constitution now safeguard the jobs of all women.

57. In fact, under Section 35 (1) of the Protection of Employment Act (1986), all women are entitled to 13 weeks maternity leave.

58. Maternity benefits are payable to women who have been employed and who have contributed to Social Security for 39 weeks. Such benefits are also payable to the wives of insured men. Since 1993, the maternity grant was increased from EC $200.00 to EC $300.00

59. Section 38 of the Protection of Employment Act, 1986, makes it unlawful for an employee to be given notice of dismissal during maternity leave and Section 39 makes it unlawful for an employee's employment to be terminated by reason only of her pregnancy or confinement or of any illness consequent upon her pregnancy or confinement.

60. The laws (Miscellaneous provisions) Act (No.2) of 1992 gives magistrates more discretion in dealing with the needs of children and spouses in maintenance cases. The meagre figure of $15 per week allowed for children, was replaced by a sum to be decided after a means test was administered. Child support therefore, was to be determined on the parent's ability to pay. The Act also provided maintenance for an additional 2yrs from 16yrs of age to 18yrs.

61. Unfortunately, due to the lack of legal aid and the time consuming nature of the legal process many women feel it a useless and humiliating burden to take a man to court for maintenance. Some have reported that despite the "means test", the amount eventually awarded is not even equal to the pay for the days which the woman may have lost in the attempt to complete the court procedure.

Article 5 Sex Roles and Stereotyping

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

37. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

38. To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

Comments

62. Besides legal measures, other measures have been taken to change the social and cultural patterns that lead to stereotyping or reinforcing the idea of the inferiority of women in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. To say that the battle has been won would be premature, but special measures such as providing gender training for teachers, the introduction of a Family Life curriculum into the primary and secondary school syllabi ; and the establishment of special gender sensitive programmes run by the Teachers Union and by Guidance Officers are shifting gradually the perceived and actual roles of men and women and girls and boys in the Federation.

63. The ideal goal of gender equality, is an uphill climb within the present social context of Kittitian and Nevisian Society. This is so because social sanctions persist against shifting gender

roles either at home or in the workplace. Nursing is still a predominantly female career, whereas carpentry and masonry are male occupations. At school, home economics and needle- work are still female subjects pitched against the alternatives of woodwork and metal-work which are predominantly, male subjects.

64. The Ministry of Education in attempting to change those roles and sex stereotypes has instituted an orientation to Technical and Vocational Education to all secondary students in forms one and two. Earlier attempts which were made in the 1980's at the Basseterre High School and at the Sandy Point High in the 1970's, had achieved minimal successes. This new initiative, exposes all students male and female to all the possible technical vocational subjects allowing them to choose freely their area of interest. Increasingly young girls are choosing the traditionally male subjects and some boys have chosen the traditionally female subjects. Educators agree that there is need to encourage more action in this regard.

65. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has conducted courses for adult women in home maintenance, tiling, plumbing, electricity and masonry.

66. St. Kitts and Nevis has an impressive list of statutory and institutional provisions for the protection of women and children. However the law enforcement agencies are generally handicapped by a number of traditional social practices and institutions, these include -

- an unwillingness of women to testify against their spouses/partners in cases of physical, sexual and other abuses;
- the persuasion of victims by family members, particularly in cases of incest and molestation, not to testify against the perpetrator; and;
- inadequate institutional protection for battered women and children.

67. Positive changes have been made in the treatment of victims of sexual assault by law enforcement officers, many of whom have been exposed to ongoing training in the treatment of victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse; and on the rights of the victims. Special protocols have been put in place to deal with the sexual abuse of children such as the establishment of a crisis team. Five female police officers have been identified and trained specifically to deal with such cases. Rape kits outlining proper procedures for handling victims of rape have been made available to the police service. Training on the issues of domestic violence, which began in the 1980's but was discontinued, has been reintroduced since May 1997.

68. Special measures have been taken to raise awareness and inform law enforcement officials of the issue of violence against women, particularly within the home. A special unit within the Police force has been established to deal with gender based violence. Officers from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) , Drug Squad and Officers who have been in the force for under ten years and new recruits have all been involved in special training programmes on gender based violence and rape.

69. No place or shelter for women faced with violence within the family, exists in St. Kitts and Nevis. However, with the increased sensitization of the police service, more women are going to their nearest police station and receiving assistance. In Nevis, women go the NGO operated Change

Center which provides counseling and advice. In St. Kitts women, in addition to going to their nearest police station, call or visit the Ministry of Women's Affairs for assistance. Safe rooms are also available in various private establishments.

Article 6 Suppression of the Exploitation of Women

States parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Comments

70. The country does not have legislation to prevent traffic in women and girls and has not observed any activity in this area to date. As the society increases its dependence on the tourist sector consideration is being given as to what type of legislation, if any, will be required to protect women and girls. There has not been any known cases of labour agencies involved in trafficking of women and girls, however the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act CAP 19, of the revised edition 1961 does protect girls under sixteen from having their sexual services sold to third parties.

71. Prostitution is illegal in St. Kitts and Nevis but no charges have been brought against anyone for engaging in this act in recent history as whatever prostitution exists is very difficult to ascertain.

72. Although base line data is not always disaggregated by sex, there is a sense that violence against women and children in St. Kitts and Nevis, both reported and unreported, is on the increase. The various types of violence are categorized as physical assault including rape, incest, abuse and neglect. Some women and children live in fear of some form of abuse. During 1985-1987, there were 26 reported cases of domestic violence and 32 cases were reported during 1991-93.

73. There has been a marked improvement in the collection of data due to the establishment of a statistical records department in the Police Service. This has been established largely because of the encouragement of the Department of Women's Affairs.

74. Information on crimes committed, as of the year 1996, show a break down of crimes of a domestic nature. For example, in April to December of 1996, of the 164 crimes that were detected, 64 were domestic related. In 1997, and 1998 a total of 435 crimes were detected, 139 of which were domestic related.

75. Efficient recording and collating of data by the police and increased public awareness has increased the number of reported domestic violence offences in the society. This is likely to improve with time, as women realize that there are support mechanisms in place to help them overcome the obstacles they face.

76. Where data exists, as in the case of the reported crimes against public morality, which has two classifications "rape and indecent assault and other", the data as outlined in table 4 , on the following page, reveals a steady increase of reported cases of rape and indecent assault between the period 1991 when the figure numbered 18 to 1996 when the figure jumped to 55.

77. The data from the Police Department on the number of cases which reach them indicates that there is a higher incidence of physical and sexual abuse perpetrated against female children than male children (70% and 30% respectively) during the period under review.

78. Also, according to available data for 1990 to 1995 there were more female children than male children who were neglected by their parents/guardians.

79. In November 1989 a Delinquency Department of the Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force was established at the request of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Department is responsible for the investigation of all reported cases of child abuse, domestic violence and juvenile delinquency. Counseling is also another function of the Department. The role, function and authority of this Department is currently under review to increase its efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 4: Crimes reported to Police 1981-1996

Crimes and Offences Against Public Morality	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Rape and Indecent Assault	21	11	29	15	17	26	30	21	21	19
Other	4	3	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	2
Crimes and Offences Against Public Morality	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**		
Rape and Indecent Assault	18	33	24	29	49	55	34	39		
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1		

Source: St Kitts & Nevis Statistical Office

Article 7 Political and Public Life

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and , in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

39. To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
40. To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
41. To participate in non-governmental organisations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Comments

80. Strong extended family networks have enabled women from the post emancipation period to modern times, to participate in public life and more recently political activities. That participation may have been to pursue a professional career or to participate in local and national activities. Unfortunately as family networks break down , due to such factors as migration, single parent households and the adoption of single family household units, the traditional support services for women also collapse. It has become apparent that support services have to be provided by the public or private sectors or NGO's, to enable women to participate fully in political and public life.

81. Despite the above, women participate actively in the political life of the Federation. Women in the Federation have had the right to vote since the early part of this century. Data from the general elections of 1993 revealed that of the total number of registered voters who cast their ballots in St. Kitts/Nevis, 8024 females exercised their franchise in comparison to 7480 men. Women therefore have a very strong voice in shaping the political direction of the country. (St. Kitts/Nevis National Report for the Fourth World Conference on Women).

82. Women however are not found, commensurate with their numbers, in the decision making positions in the Federation (see Table 4). An inhibiting factor to women's participation as candidates in the electoral process has been identified as the political culture which still entrenches male dominated political parties which select male candidates over women candidates and the campaign process itself which involves a great degree of "mud slinging" and negative targeting of individuals over issues. Women both inside the political parties and outside are beginning to challenge these traditional notions.

83. At the administrative/ management levels of the public sector, women are still under-represented. The number of female Permanent Secretaries has increased slightly, moving from one (1) in 1980 to zero (0) in 1985, three (3) in 1992 and four (4) of nine (9) in 1998. The positions of Permanent Secretary are held by women in the Ministries of Education, Health, Women's Affairs and Labour, as well as Foreign Affairs. In Nevis only one woman ever held the post of Principal Assistant Secretary but in 1993 there were no females either in the Permanent Secretary or Assistant Secretary category.

84. Fifteen per cent (15 %) of Heads of Department were women in 1992, but by 1998, the end of the period under review, the percentage had increased significantly, to 40%.

85. The area of diplomatic representation continues to be one in which female representation is very low. There has never been a woman High Commissioner or Ambassador assigned to any of the overseas missions. However, there have been three women in the post of Counselor and one in the position of Second Secretary.

Table 5 : Women in Decision-making Positions

Decision making Positions	1980		1985		1992		1997		1998	
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Parliamentary Assemblies	13	1	14	1	14	1	12	2	14	2
Ministers of Government	5	0	8	1	7	1	7	0	7	0
Permanent Secretaries	11	1	12	0	9	3	9	4	5	4
Senior Asst. Secretaries	1	0	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	2
Asst. Secretaries	11	9	11	12	18	8	6	11	7	12
Department Directors	16	1	15	2	13	3	19	10	16	11
Deputy Directors	9	2	9	2	8	2	1	0	2	3
Ambassadors	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	7	0
Rep. Leg. System	5	2	8	2	-	-	* Total Number 18		* Total Number 20	
State legislatures& Local Rep. Bodies	5	0	5	0	5	0	4	1	4	1

Source: 1980-92 - St. Kitts/Nevis National Report for the Fourth World Conference on Women. 1997- Division of Women's Affairs

86. The legal profession is achieving more gender balance as there are more women pursuing careers in the legal profession. The number is likely to increase as the majority of the Federations law students at the University of the West Indies are women. Although there are female who are Crown Counsels in the Legal Department, the positions of Attorney-General, Solicitor General, Legal Draftsman, Acting Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Advisor however are all held by men.

87. In the trade union movement more women than men are members of the rank and file, and of the largest trade union in the country, of the fifteen (15) member executive, six (6) are women.

Article 8 International Representation and Participation

States parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and, without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations

Comments

88. Since independence, the government of St. Christopher and Nevis has not appointed a woman to the post of Ambassador. Women drawn from the senior technical level such as the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, have represented the country at international fora in their areas of expertise. Since the Beijing Conference, more women have been encouraged to represent the Government at international fora and have done so.

Article 9 Nationality

States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

Comments

89. Prior to the 1983 Constitution, citizenship by descent depended on the male partner in cases where the parents are married, and on the woman if the child is born out of wedlock. The Constitution now allows for either parent to transmit citizenship to a child, wherever that child is born.

90. The constitution protects the equal rights of women, whether married or not, to acquire, change or retain their nationality. This right is not affected by marriage to a non-citizen or by a change of nationality by the husband.

91. Chapter VIII, section 92 of the Constitution protects the equal rights of men and women with respect to gaining residence and employment status for their spouse in situations where the spouse is a non-national. Chapter II section 14 guarantees a women's right to obtain a passport or to travel without the permission of her husband or male partner.

92. In consultations held with members of civil society, it was indicated that, they were unaware of any instances or complaints by women, that these rights had been infringed.

Article 10 Education

States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

42. *The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;*

43. Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

44. The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and , in particular, by the revision of text books and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

45. The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

46. The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

47. The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

48. The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

49. Access to specific educational information to help ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

Comment

93. There are no known discriminatory practices against women in any programme of the Ministry of Education and its affiliated institutions schools and colleges, all of which are co- educational. Women have equal opportunity to access any position or programme in the Ministry and are paid equally with men for the same job. In fact the majority of persons in administrative positions within the Ministry of Education, (Principals, Head Teachers of schools and colleges) are women.

94. St. Kitts and Nevis has primary and post primary school enrolment levels similar in size to each other and possess one of the highest secondary enrolment ratio in the region. St. Kitts and Nevis has a gross enrolment ratio of 100 percent for the age group 6-15 years. Equal participation of girls and boys exists throughout the system, and a similar enrolment ratio exists in rural as well as urban areas. The total school enrolment, is equivalent to about 30% of the population. In the area of education its achievement of numerical gender equality is outstanding.

95. According to Table 6, equal number of males and females attend Nursery/Infant School, and the number of students in Primary School, are not significantly different.

96. There has been a steady increase in enrolment at Pre-schools and Nurseries during the period 1988-1999. The years 1996, 1997 and 1998 show very high enrolment. As women continue to succeed in education and join the workforce the demand for places and the enrolment at Pre-Schools and Nurseries is expected to increase.

Table 6: Population Attending School Full time by Type of School and by Sex for 1991

St. Kitts and Nevis			
Type of Institution	M	F	Total
Nursery/Infant	777	777	1,554
Primary	3398	3,341	6739
Secondary	1417	1586	3,003
Senior School	-	-	-
Junior School	523	481	1,004
Trade School	30	-	30
Technical Institute	64	77 115	141
Community College	62	116	177
University	71	118 11	187
Other	66		184
Not Stated	4		15
Total	6,271	6,377	12,648

Source: UNICEF, SITAN Table 3.1 '91-96

97. In Table 7 , it would be observed that both at the Public Secondary and Private Secondary Schools, which number seven and one respectively, the female students slightly out-number their male counterparts. In 1985 the combined male enrolment from the private and public secondary schools totaled 2,225 out of a combined student population of 4,380, representing 54.7 per cent males and 45.3 percent females. Apart from that one solitary year, for each of the succeeding ten years the female enrolment exceeded that of the male. In fact in 1995 the male and female population represented 49.2 per cent and 50.85 per cent respectively in the public schools, in the private secondary schools the enrolment ratio was 30.8 per cent and 69.2 per cent for male and female students respectively.

98. Following the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination in 1972 secondary school enrolment has always been high. The Education Act of 1972 makes it mandatory for all students 12-15 to attend secondary school and there are enough places to accommodate all students hence the high enrollment.

Table 7 : Secondary Enrolment by School Type

Public				Private			
Year	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total Public and Private
1985	4,038	2,053	1,985	342	172	170	4,380
1994	4,236	2,056	2,180	141	46	85	4,377
1995	4,541	2,241	2,300	156	48	108	4,697

Source: Table 3:25. UNICEF SITAN 1991-96 p 56

99. The one area in the education system in which the issue of the elimination of discrimination against women occurred, was in regard to the question of the continuing education of teen-age mothers. This is of some concern as an examination of the data on live births by age of the mother indicates that of the babies born between 1992 -1995, 17 -24 per cent were born to teen-aged mothers.

100. Four decades ago, the notion of teen-aged mothers continuing their education in the formal secondary school setting was unheard of. Further, at that time pregnant unwed female civil servants, especially teachers resigned often before their "plight" became public knowledge. By the mid 1970's all female civil servants, with babies born out of wedlock were placed on forced leave of absence for one year. At the student level, the entrenched mores of the society as well as existing unwritten legislation, precluded teenage mothers from returning to school.

101. The mid 1980's witnessed a change in Government policy towards pregnant unwed female civil servants against whom all discriminatory regulation and practices were removed as regards their continuation in the civil service. Further, Government ensured that unwed female civil servants were entitled to the same social security and maternity benefits as females who were married.

102. The Ministry of Education also initiated Family Life Education as part of its Comprehensive Health Education programme, and along with specially selected Guidance Counselors (and Career Guidance Officers) sought to present to adolescents viable alternatives to early teen-aged pregnancy.

103. It was noted that although teen age mothers could return to school, at the discretion of the principals, due to the social stigma attached to pregnancy and the lack of societal knowledge about the rights to an education, most principals disallowed teen-age mothers return to school. Some teen-age mothers chose to continue their education by attending evening private classes.

104. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has held numerous seminars, public fora and media discussions to reduce the stigma attached to teen mothers being returned to school and to better inform both the education professionals and the general public concerning the discriminatory nature of the old policy. Following debate on the issue , the Government announced a new policy which affirmed the right of pregnant teens and teen mothers to be allowed to continue their education putting an end to years of discrimination against them.

105. There have been further initiatives to support teen mothers who have returned to school. A multi-sectoral team traveled to Venezuela in October of 1997, to observe practices in teen mother support. One (1) NGO teen mother group exist in St. Kitts.

106. Enrollment statistics at the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College indicate that women outnumber men, by almost two to one. In the various divisions of the college, women out number men in every division, except the technical division. It is still evident that, in the division of Teacher Education and Nursing Education, there is a preponderance of females.

Table 8: Enrollment : CFB College

Division	Programme	1995-1996			1996-1997			1997-1998		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Arts, Science and General Studies	'A' Level	55	120	175	60	134	194	83	130	213
Technical, Vocational and Management Studies	Technical, Vocational and Management Studies	90	52	42	87	46	133	109	70	179
Teacher Training	Teacher Education	18	33	50	19	35	56	15	40	55
Health Sciences	Nursing Education	-	63	63	-	30	30	-	21	21
Adult and Continuing Education	Continuing Studies	231	401	632	263	523	816	124	397	521
Total Student	Population	394	841	1063	459	760	1229	331	658	989

107. All enrolled children, in primary, secondary and tertiary schools are provided with free text books and students whose family income falls below EC$4000.00 per month have an examination fee waiver. Similarly, students whose parents' income fall below EC$1000.00 per month receive free uniforms. Also all children in primary schools receive a free school lunch while students in secondary schools who are needy receive a similar service.

108. All of the above programmes are available to male and female students with equal access.

Article 11 Employment

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

50. *The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;*
51. *The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;*
52. *The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;*
53. *The right to equal remuneration, including benefits and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;*
54. *The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;*
55. *The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the reproductive function.*

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

56. *To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;*
57. *To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;*
58. *To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child care facilities;*
59. *To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.*

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Comment

109. An analysis of the November 1994 labour Force Survey revealed that there was a high percentage of female-headed households (47%) with dependent children under the age of fifteen. Only forty-three per cent (43%) of these female heads of households were gainfully employed. Data from the 1980 and 1991 census indicates that female unemployment rates have been consistently higher than male unemployment rates (See Table 9). As expected, a higher proportion of women were involved in home duties than were men.

110. Although female employment has increased from 1980 to 1991, by as much as 10 per cent, according to table 9, the combination of the high proportion of female headed households and the still significant unemployment rates of women, causes the employment of women to be of critical concern to the policy makers. This is evidenced in the priority which government has enunciated to the issue of women and poverty eradication.

111. Much has been done to safeguard the rights of working women against discriminatory practices based on maternity. Unmarried women who become pregnant while working in the Public Service instead of being automatically dismissed or suspended for one year have been by the "Protection of the Employment Act of 1986", entitled like married women to 13 weeks maternity leave with pay.

Table 9 : Population 15 years of age and over by sex and economic activity 1980 and 1991 censuses

Percent Distribution						
Economic Activity	Both Sexes		Male	Female	Male	Female
	1980	1991	1980	1980	1991	1991
Employed	58.6	63.3	76.4	43.2	73.0	53.3
Seekers	6.7	2.5	7.1	6.2	2.4	2.6
Wanted work and available	1.7	0.6	1.7	1.6	0.6	0.5
Home Duties	18.0	11.9	1.1	32.6	1.6	21.6
Students	1.0	8.8	1.3	0.7	8.6	8.9
Retired	7.0	7.4	6.1	7.9	7.6	7.3
Disabled	5.0	3.6	3.8	6.1	3.0	4.0
Other	2.0	0.9	2.4	1.6	1.0	0.9
Not Stated	-	1.0	-	-	1.2	0.9

Source: Table 45 Digest of Selected Demographic &Social Indicators 19690-1994. ECLAC/CDCC Demography Unit, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

112. Social Security regulations stipulate payment to a woman who has been employed and who had contributed to Social Security for 39 weeks , without discrimination as to her marital status.

The Protection of Employment Act, 1986 significantly benefitted the working women especially those employed in factories. The Law provides for two weeks annual vacation leave with pay, and for redundancy pay when necessary, when the conditions under the Act are met. The Act limits the probation period for domestic workers to four weeks and eliminated terminations on the grounds of marital status, pregnancy and illness.

113. The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provision Act) of 1992 relieved one of the growing concerns of women. The age of a dependent child was raised from 16 to 18 years. The Law also allowed the Magistrates more discretion in fixing the maintenance cases pertaining to children and spouses. Instead of the maximum payment of $15.00 per week, payment has to be made based on affordability.

114. The provision of day care services has facilitated women's ability to access greater opportunities to find employment outside of the home. In the Federation there are 70 day care centers, 14 of which are owned and operated by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis and which offer satisfactory child care at reasonable rates. In fact, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has recently built the Pond's Industrial Site Day Care Center . This center which was jointly funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government caters for about 150 children. In 1980 there were eight (8) rural day care centres and nine (9) urban in the Federation. The number increased to seventeen (17) rural and 16 urban in 1985, and in 1992 to 33 rural and 36 urban centres. By 1998 , the end of the period under review, the number of day care facilities in St. Kitts had risen to 85, an increase of 23%. The data clearly demonstrates that there is a demand for day care centers and that both private individuals and Government have responded to the needs of parents, many of whom are single females.

115. The number of Nurseries or Day Care Centers in St. Kitts and Nevis owned by the Government remained stable for the first half of the decade under review, but increased by 50% during the latter half of that decade. The increase in Public Pre-schools was less significant. On the other hand the private Day Care Centers increased almost 700 per cent (from 3 to 20) between the years 1986 to 1995. Private Day Care Centers continued to show significant increase during the years 95-98. During the 97-98 school year, Private Day Care Centers accounted to 70 of the eighty five centers in the Federation.

STATISTICS - EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1995 - 1996

	St. Kitts	Nevis
Total Number of Centers	55	16
Government Centers	11	3
Privates Centers	44	12
Enrolment	1880	480
Males	952	230
Females	928	230
Staff	142	480
Preschool	74	31
Nursery	44	9
Domestic	24	8

1996 - 1997

	St. Kitts	Nevis
Total Number of Centers	61	11
Government Centers	12	3
Private Centers	49	8
Enrolment	1989	421
Males	1030	218
Females	959	203
Staff	175	41
Preschool	77	29
Nursery	72	4
Domestic Workers	26	8

1997 - 1998

	St. Kitts	Nevis
Total Number of Centers	73	12
Government Centers	12	3
Private Centers	61	9
Enrolment	2013	455
Males	1040	240
Females	973	215
Staff	209	41
Preschool	94	26
Nursery	78	4
Domestic Workers	37	11

116. In spite of the 100 per cent increase in fees from 1991 to 1992 the relative costs for attending Government owned institutions remained low over the past decade. In contrast fees paid for attendance at private Day Care Centers and Pre-Schools, which were sometimes five times more than that paid at Government institutions, witnessed several dramatic increases that varied from 100 per cent to 250 percent during the period under review.

117. There still exists some enclaves of male dominance in the work place as table 10 suggests. This is so, particularly in the areas such as construction, beverages, metal craft, furniture, and telecommunications. The significant female presence in the electronic sector can be attributable to the female work force in the Free Trade Zone engaged in production of electronic components.

Table 10: NO OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN PRINCIPAL SERVICES AND INDUSTRIES 1988 - 1995

	1988			1989			1990		
SECTOR	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Construction	613	19	632	718	28	746	627	27	654
Hotels	296	295	591	351	334	685	320	362	682
Banking	97	156	253	96	171	267	100	187	287
Insurance	26	32	58	28	37	65	24	44	68
Garment	67	571	638	47	454	501	43	402	445
Electronics	131	830	961	111	875	986	88	834	922
Beverages	106	17	123	112	17	129	157	16	173
Food & Dairy Products	50	21	71	50	22	72	53	33	86
Craft	14	16	30	10	17	27	7	15	22
Metal Craft	10	0	10	10	1	11	11	2	13
Furniture	12	0	12	12	1	13	8	1	9
Bread & Pastries	30	32	62	27	39	66	26	39	65
Miscellaneous Industries	78	39	117	105	62	167	107	70	177
Restaurant & Bars	38	72	110	47	81	128	50	90	140
Telecommunications	195	40	235	191	47	238	182	57	239
Radio & T.V.	13	10	23	14	10	24	14	10	24
Printing & publishing	28	26	54	30	24	54	28	32	60
Airline services	56	32	88	69	41	110	72	53	125
Accounting	12	11	23	12	12	24	10	16	26
Security Guard Services	34	24	58	28	35	63	21	33	54
Research	20	8	28	33	10	43	32	13	45
Recreational Facilities	46	35	81	49	43	92	57	49	106
Petroleum Marketers	17	3	20	22	2	24	22	3	25
Garages & Service Stations	49	19	68	49	19	68	49	19	68
Commercial	456	404	860	481	466	947	558	535	1093
	1993			1994			1995		
SECTOR	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Construction	683	41	724	666	38	704	614	35	649
Hotels	377	383	760	350	368	718	329	367	696
Banking	149	275	424	161	286	447	190	336	526
Insurance	35	58	93	36	59	95	36	60	96
Garment	47	399	446	31	240	271	25	180	205
Electronics	107	1099	1206	106	1045	1151	74	960	1034
Beverages	163	23	186	170	28	198	167	25	192
Food & Dairy Products	80	30	110	76	31	107	69	30	99
Craft	5	15	20	5	11	16	9	17	26
Metal Craft	11	3	14	11	3	14	12	1	13

Furniture	15	4	19	14	4	18	11	5	16
Bread & Pastries	46	37	83	46	45	91	44	47	91
Miscellaneous Industries	125	93	218	80	90	170	68	110	178
Restaurant & Bars	69	111	180	68	132	200	69	155	224
Telecommunications	165	62	227	173	63	236	174	71	245
Radio & T.V.	10	6	16	10	5	15	9	5	14
Printing & publishing	40	42	82	34	43	77	36	43	79
Airline services	77	72	149	4	80	164	87	74	161
Accounting	8	27	35	8	29	37	10	24	34
Security Guard Services	33	14	47	41	13	54	57	12	69
Research	31	18	49	19	11	30	24	7	31
Recreational Facilities	71	47	118	59	48	107	65	44	109
Petroleum Marketers	23	3	26	19	4	23	19	4	23
Garages & Service Stations	60	32	92	62	32	94	79	45	124
Commercial	570	582	1152	650	633	1283	702	707	1409

Source: Ministry of Labour, St Kitts/Nevis

Article 12 Equality in Access to Health Care

(1)	States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health services, including those relating to family planning.
(2)	Not withstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

Comments

118. The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is mindful of the fact that the unequal status of women may hamper their access to adequate health care. Therefore Government has ensured that in the provision of health services women have access to health care on an equal basis with men.

119. In the area of women's reproductive health, the health policy has been to bring maternal death as close to zero as is possible and to put in place an ante and post natal health programme that will ensure the optimum health of the women.

120. Virtually all births take place in the four hospitals in the Federation, under the supervision of trained health personnel. One maternal death was recorded during the period 1994 to 1998.

121. The maternal mortality rate has declined consistently over the period and could be attributed to better health education, awareness and improved health standards.

Table 11: Maternal Mortality Rate (M.M.R.)

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
M.M.R. (%)	2	3.1	1.1	1.1	0	0

Source: UNICEF SITAN 1991-96, Table 2.6

High risk pregnancies

122. At the end of 1995, there was only one obstetrician employed by government. There are now two. High risk pregnancies, when detected are therefore referred to an obstetrician of the mother's choice. Visits were in the past, curtailed due to high cost of private treatment, thus leaving both the mother and baby at risk. However, at present all mothers with high risk pregnancies can see an obstetrician free of cost. Consideration is being given by government to the establishment of a Central Centre/Clinic to which all such cases can be referred.

Antenatal care

123. On average 35 percent of pregnant women are seen by clinic nurses, bi-monthly, at the seventeen centers in the Federation. Physician data is unavailable though their services are heavily utilized.

124. Vitamin A deficiency has not been predominant in pregnant women during the last five years. Health workers have sensitized the population to the need to eat fruits and vegetables and in particular green and leafy vegetables. Iron tablets are issued free at Health Centers to cater for any deficiency. These are issued either every two weeks or monthly depending on the stage of the pregnancy. Hemoglobin levels are checked free at the Joseph Nathaniel France hospital laboratory twice during pregnancy. Data and results are remitted to the Nutrition Surveillance Unit.

125. The data outlined in Tables 12 and 13 for the period 1986 -1995 show that the prevalence of anaemia among women has been reduced significantly. In St. Kitts in 1986, 8.4% of those who attended the clinic had a level of less than 9 grams. This figure fell to 1.3% in 1995. In that year 92 women had levels of 9 to 10.9 grams and 209 had, a level of 11 grams and over.

Table 12: Antenatal Hemoglobin Level- St. Kitts, 1986 - 1995

	Low <9 grams		Medium 9 10.9 grams		High 11 grams +		Total
Year	No	%	No	%	No.	%	No
1986	35	8.4	220	52.6	163	39.0	418
1987	27	8.2	188	57.1	114	34.5	329
1988	20	6.4	124	34.5	170	54.1	314
1989	7	2.5	85	30.6	186	66.9	278
1994	4	1.4	82	27.7	210	70.9	296
1995	4	1.3	92	30.2	209	68.5	305

Source: UNICEF SITAN 1991-96, Table 2.14 p. 27

126. In Nevis this reduction in the prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women who attend antenatal clinics has been drastic.

127. In 1995, 1.1 percent of women who attended the clinic had less than 9 grams; 14 (15.7%) had between 9 and 10.9 grams and 74 (73.1%) had a level of 11 grams and over.

128. Iron tablets are distributed to pregnant women free of cost, once they attend the antenatal clinics.

Table 13: Antenatal Haemoglobin Level- Nevis , 1986 - 1995

	Low <9 grams		Medium 9 10.9 grams		High 11 grams +		Total
Year	No	%	No	%	No.	%	No
1986	8	5.6	63	44.4	71	50	142
1987	6	6.2	38	39.2	53	54.6	97
1988	7	7.1	51	52.0	40	40.8	98
1989	3	2.8	23	21.7	80	75.5	106
1993	4	3.8	30	28.3	72	67.9	106
1994	1	0.7	20	13.7	125	85.6	146
1995	1	1.1	14	15.7	74	73.1	89

Source: UNICEF SITAN 1991-96, Table2.15 p28

129. Virtually all births are attended to by health personnel. The number of hospital beds for 1994 are as follows: -

Table 14: Obstetric Beds St. Kitts & Nevis

Health Facility	A	B
J.N.F. (SK)	30	150
POGSON (SK) Mary	10	30 10
Charles (SK)	2	28
Alexandra (Nevis)	10	

A= Obstetric beds; B= Hospital bedsSource: Health Situations and Trends, St. Kitts and Nevis 1992-1995. PAHO/WHO

130. Obstetric emergency transfers are referred to the Joseph Nathaniel France General Hospital. The referring physician or nurse contacts the consultant and transportation is arranged by the referring party by boat, plane or ambulance.

131. In 1993 there were 33 doctors serving a population of 43,520. This gave a doctor population ratio of 1:1,319 for the Federation. During the same period, the total number of qualified and trained nurses and nursing assistants, numbered 287. This gave a nurse/ assistant population ratio of 1:152. By 1998, the end of the period under review, there were 46 doctors and two hundred and seventy nurses.

Infant Mortality Rate

132. The Infant Mortality Rate which is a good indicator of how well a country cares for its infants has been consistently below the 50% recommended by the Lima Accord. The 1997 Infant Mortality Rate for St. Kitts and Nevis was 22.9%. This relatively low IMR is attributable to the improvements in basic health care, sanitation and water services. Rural and urban ante-natal and child welfare clinics provide valuable information to parents on infant care.

Health Education

133. Family life and health Education is taught in all High Schools in the Federation. Workshops on parent skills and related fields are conducted by the Department of Community Affairs, the Family Planning Association and other non-governmental organizations. The early childhood curriculum also contains Family Life Education components.

Fertility Rate

134. The fertility rate for 1992-1995 ranged from 76.1 % to 87.2 %. Despite the mild increases in the rate for 1994-1995 there is a definite decline in the general fertility rate as compared to 1980-1990. The general fertility rate for the years 1996 to 1998 there were 76.9 %, 83.0 % and 82.4 % respectively.

135. An examination of live births by the age of the mother indicate that of the babies born in 1992-1995, 17-24 percent were to teenage mothers. A range of 23-35 percent of these births were to teenagers who had at least one previous birth.

136. This situation has implications for the health of the mother and the child as well as the ability of the mother to adequately care for the child.

Table 15: Live births to Teenagers by Parity

Year	Age Group	Parity					Total	%of Total Births
		1	2	3	4	5		
1992	10-14 15-19	4 106	1 47	11		1	5 165	0.6 19.5
1993	10-14 15-19	7 95	45	6	1	0	7 147	0.8 17.3
1994	10-14 15-19	8 111	36	10	1	0	8 158	0.9 17.4
1995	10-14 15-19	3 99	24	5	2	0	3 130	0.4 16.6

Source: Health Situations and Trends, St. Kitts and Nevis 1992-1995. PAHO/WHO

137. Data was not readily available for the incidence of abortions for unwanted pregnancies. Abortion is not legal however, a women with access to finances may procure an abortion. This situation leaves poor women at the mercy of back street abortionists, without adequate health care. It was reported in a study by Ernest Pate on "Maternal and Child Health" in Health Conditions in the Caribbean, published by the Pan American Health Organization , that " 50% or more of the gynecology beds in many hospitals are occupied by patients with incomplete abortions, which cause unnecessary overcrowding of hospitals."

138. Family planning services are provided at health centers and by the Family Planning Association, a non governmental organization. The government family planning services are available to all women. There is an increasing number of active acceptors utilizing the government health centres as the following table indicates. (See Table: 16) Elective sterilization is available in St. Kitts and Nevis but in the case of women, consensus with their spouses is desired, but, the procedure can be obtained without the husbands' consent.

Table 16: Active Acceptors by Choice of Method 1992-1995 at government Clinics

Method	Project Active Acceptors			
	1992	1993	1994	1995
Oral IUD	50.2	52.7	51.0	52.3
Injectable	12.2	10.6	10.4	10.7
Other	10.0	8.0	11.4	9.1
	27.5	28.6	26.9	27.8
Total	99.9	99.9	100	100

Source: Health Situations and Trends, St. Kitts and Nevis 1992-1995. PAHO/WHO pg.17

STD's and HIV/AIDS

139. Data available on STD's and HIV AIDS provided by the health centares are outlined in Table 17. The data suggests a high incidence of gonococcal infection compared with other STDs.

Table 17: STDs by Type, St. Kitts & Nevis (Adult population)

Type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Syphilis	4	1	2	28	24	24
Gonococcal Infection	36	94	100	80	47	52
Chlamydial infection	0	0	0	0	1	18
Genital discharge	0	0	0	0	0	18
Syndrome Genital Utrea	0	0	0	0	0	5
Syndrome AIDS	0	1	4	2	6	2
Urethral discharge	0	0	0	0	4	0
Yeast Infection	0	0	0	13	6	0
Vaginitis	0	0	2	0	0	0

Source: UNICEF SITAN 1991-96, Table 2.21 p.33

140. Fourteen cases of AIDS were reported for the period 1992 to 1995. The annual incidence rate for reported cases was 93.7/million (1993), and 139/million in 1994. Information on risk factors or epidemiological profile of cases was not available. Information on HIV sero prevalence was obtained from the Central laboratory at the J.N. France Hospital. No sero prevalence studies have been conducted., but certain sentinel groups have been tested - blood donors, antenatal mothers and prisoners. The results are tabulated below.

Table 18: HIV Test for Sentinel Groups 1992 - 1995

Groups	No. Tested	No. HIV positive
Blood Donors	1297	1
Prisoners	352	2
Antenatal	952	0

Source: Health Situation and Trends 1992-95. PAHO/WHO Table 19, p 23

141. Unfortunately, difficult economic circumstances are impacting on the medical care of women during pregnancy and in the post-natal period, as such, medical care is no longer always free of charge. However, women in verifiably difficult economic circumstances are provided with care free of cost.

Article 13 Social and Economic Benefits

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

60. The right to family benefits;

61. The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

62. The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and in all aspects of cultural life.

Comments

142. The state makes provision for a social safety net to support those individuals and families who may fall upon difficult circumstances, such as death, disability, or indigence and these benefits are accessible to married women in their own right or as parents without prejudice.

143. Loans are available to both men and women, and when granted are based on their risk factor. Although this may in fact be the case, a review of the data indicated that more men than women take loans. This may be due to the power and economic structures within the society, as well as to traditional beliefs. Some women are not familiar with procedures for completing loan applications and submitting required information/data and if they encounter difficulties they may be daunted.

144. At the Foundation for National Development (FND), loans are offered in a range of sectors: farming, fishing, manufacturing, services, retail, entertainment, construction and education. The 1992 and 1993 figures reveal that men from the rural areas borrow mainly for farming entertainment and retail , in that order of priority. In the case of rural women, farming again takes priority, along with services. On the other hand, the urban men concentrate on services while the women focus on services and retail. The total amount borrowed by men from the rural areas was $387,786.01 and from the urban communities $244,997. Whereas rural women borrowed $86,554.00 and urban women $182,053.95. The 1993 figures illustrate that more women from the rural communities took loans, than those from the urban areas. In addition , overall more women sought credit in 1993 over 1992.

Table 19: Loans Granted at Development Institutions

Year	Number of rural men	Number of rural women	Number of urban men	Number of urban women	Number of all men	Number of all women
1992	222	191	234	134	456	325
1993	234	213	212	208	447	421*

Source: St. Kitts/Nevis national report on the status of women for the 4th World Conference on Women, 1995.

145. Data on rural land ownership and real estate tenure in St. Kitts was unavailable. However in Nevis, statistics indicate that women own property and use it as collateral for building purposes. The 1993 figures obtained from the Registry show that 112 men and 101 women own land. Thirty five joint family members own land and 34 husband and wives also own land jointly, a total of 282 registered titles. More than 75 percent of the land is located outside the capital, Charlestown. A sample of 32 registered in the first two months of 1993 shows that women own 345,134 square feet, men 634, 953 square feet and jointly 290,790 square feet. The difference in acreage implies that women tend to own smaller plots of land. It is important to note that no barriers confront women with respect to inheritance or ownership of property.

146. It would appear that the qualifying requirements for access to loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit affect particularly married women differently than they do men as most banks require a husband's signature in order for a married woman to gain access.

Article 14 Rural Women

63.	*States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which they play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.*
64.	*States Parties shall take all appropriate; measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and , in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:*
(3)	*To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;*
(4)	*To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counseling and services tin family planning;*
(5)	*To benefit directly from social security programmes*
(6)	*To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;*
(7)	*To organise self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;*
(8)	*To participate in all community activities;*
(9)	*To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;*
(10)	*To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.*

Comments

147. Barring the data which was available on land holdings and loans discussed under article 13, data disaggregated by gender on rural issues was unavailable. However, it should be noted that in St. Kitts and Nevis, due mainly to its smallness in size, the differences between rural and urban are not as stark and sharply defined as in larger countries.

Article 15 Equality Before the Law and in Civil Matters

(11)	*States parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.*
(12)	*States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. They shall in particular give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.*
(13)	*States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.*
(14)	*States parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.*

Comments

148. Under the married Women's Property Act Chapter 3:28, equal treatment of women with men with respect to their legal capacity to conclude contracts and administer property, is protected.

149. The opinion of local legal experts was that notwithstanding the *de jure* equality which exists between men and women before the courts, *de facto* the treatment before the courts was not always equal. It was noted that this was so particularly in cases of child abuse.

150. It was agreed, that the non-existence of legal aid, acts as a constraint to women's equal access to legal services. To improve that situation, legal advisory services have been put in place and female lawyers in private practice often provide *pro bono* legal advise to women through referrals by the NGO sector and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

151. The Constitution of St. Kitts and Nevis is the Supreme Law of the country and in it every woman is guaranteed the following rights:

20 life, liberty, security of the person, equality before the law,
21 Freedom of conscience; of expression and of assembly and association and
22 protection for her personal privacy, the privacy of her home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation.

Article 16 Equality in marriage and Family Law

65.	*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*
(15)	*The same right to enter into marriage;*
(16)	*The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;*
(17)	*The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;*
(18)	*The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their martial status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;*
(19)	*The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of the children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;*
(20)	*The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, worship, trusteeship and adoption of children or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;*
(21)	*The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;*
(22)	*The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.*
2.	*The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.*

Comments

152. Family relations in the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis are governed by a combination of civil law, religious laws and customary laws and practices. Fifty-six point one per cent (56.1%) of all households in the Federation are headed by males while the remaining forty-three point nine per cent (43.9%), are headed by females.

153. Statistical data from the Caribbean points to a household structure that is significantly female headed. Female headed households (FHH) as a percentage of the total households in various countries in the Caribbean subregion account from a low of 20 per cent in Suriname, to a high of 43.9 percent found in St. Kitts and Nevis.

154. Women heads of households in the Caribbean tend to be younger and in their child-bearing years than their counterparts in countries of the north and are more likely to be multi-generational, that is they have more than one generation living in the household. The determinants of female headship can stem from such socio-demographic factors as migration, divorce, desertion, late

marriage or unpartnered adolescent motherhood. The age specific fertility rate for St. Kitts and Nevis in 1991 for the age group 15-19 years, was 82.6 live births per 1000 women and in the 20-24 year age group 141.6 live births per 1000 women.

155. Legally, men and women have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage but only women have the right to alimony on the dissolution of a marriage, except in rare cases, where husbands can prove severe hardships and may be awarded palimony.

156. Women have the same rights as men to own, acquire, manage and dispose of property. According to the law, married women have an equal voice with their husbands in the management and disposal of property acquired during marriage but according to custom and tradition this role belongs to men. The married Women's Property Act Chapter 32.8 protects the rights of the wife with respect to property on dissolution of a marriage and determines how property is divided after divorce.

157. Unfortunately, the only rights which those who live together as husband and wife possess without legal marriage with respect to property during the relationship and on its breakdown are those of strangers - that is equitable rights assessed by contribution. This could prove to be very disadvantageous to women in the Federation, many of whom are heads of households , or partners in serial monogamous relationships, or have visiting relationships, all which may result in joint property possession.

158. With respect to the de factor family, the Social Security Act 1977 gives the Social Security Board the authority to treat a single woman who lived with a single man as his wife for the three (3) years, immediately presiding his death, as if she were his widow. The same applies to men who have lived in common-law relationships with women.

159. In the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, no law exists which forces a women to renounce her own name on marriage. Women have the right to maintain their own name on marriage by common law and usage. Through the Age of Majority Act of 1983, the age of Majority has been set at 18; Chapter 56 of the Offences Against the Person Act, section 50 has set the minimum legal age of consent to sexual intercourse at 16.

160. Despite the fact that women have the right to decide freely the number and spacing of their children, it was felt that many women do not exercise that right due to religion and custom.

161. Children of unmarried parents were discriminated against even through language. Terms such as "bastard and illegitimate" which were once used to describe such persons, can no longer be used in official documents. In 1993 the Status of Children Act was passed. This meant that the terms "bastard and illegitimate" were removed from the books as legal barriers to inheritance. Children born to unmarried mothers now have equal rights to property under intestate succession. The Constitution of St. Kitts and Nevis not only forbids discrimination by sex, but very importantly for the social structure of St. Kitts and Nevis, offers equal rights to children born in and out of wedlock (Chapter II section 15 (3)).

162. The issue of arranged child marriages does not exist in St. Kitts and Nevis, however, there are relationships between minor females and adult males that take place with the tacit consent of parents. The high teenage pregnancy rate of St. Kitts and Nevis is testimony to that fact.

163. The Adoption of Children's Act 1987, uses general terms with reference to the adopter or applicant. The Act is only gender specific when it speaks of a single male applying for the adoption of a female child.

164. In general, the law of the Federation supports the constitutionally protected rights of women and does not contradict international standards. However, efforts to ensure the realization of women's rights could benefit from a proverbial shot in the arm.

Conclusion

165. Since the ratification of CEDAW, 1985, women in St. Kitts and Nevis have realized significant material gains. However, much is desired in the ideological domain with regard to the perception of women and the respect accorded them. Continuous public education is necessary to change attitudes and culturally entrenched practices.

166. One of the areas worthy of mention, is the 'fight' on the political front for gender equality. Both of the political parties have included gender specific areas in their manifesto and while in Government have supported financially and morally the programme designed to accelerate equality of women.

167. Women in the Federation now have the right to remain in employment without discrimination with regard to their reproductive function. Also, teen mothers are now given the opportunity to return to school and are provided with support mechanisms to, assist in the completion of their education.

168. Women are still woefully under represented in areas of decision making, although some progress has been made in middle management in the Public Sector. As women perceive their roles in this area and are empowered, and as gender continues to be mainstreamed, in the workforce there should be improvements in the future.

169. The St. Kitts and Nevis Gender and Development Plan 1996 - 2000 expresses the Government's commitment to gender sensitive development. In order to achieve the goal of national gender sensitive development, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is providing gender analyses and perspectives to Government, Private Sector and Civil Society.

170. The Ministry is also ensuring that all obstacles to women's and girls participation in the economic, social and political life of the society are removed, and strengthening Government's capacity to achieve gender mainstreaming in its various sectors.

171. The achievement of equality for women and the eradication of discrimination are achievable goals which, the government and responsible agencies within the federation are determined to achieve.